REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

I. The Currently Claimed Invention

As currently claimed, the invention is a power transmission belt for a motor vehicle and presenting V-ribs made of a single elastomer material and having flat side faces and rounded ridges, wherein said ridges present a convex curvilinear profile having a mean radius of curvature greater than 1 mm and less than or equal to 1.5 mm. Applicants have identified the problem of free zone swelling deformation, which leads to cracking, and how to remedy the problem. Accordingly, the claimed belt allows an improved behavior of a belt faced with flexing phenomena while also improving the behavior relative to swelling that generates cracking at the ridges of the belt. This result, which was not obtained prior to the claimed invention, extends the lifetime of a belt.

II. Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

To establish a prima facie case of obviousness there must be some suggestion or motivation, either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to modify the references or to combine reference teachings. Furthermore, the teaching or suggestion to make the claimed invention must be found in the prior art, not in applicant's disclosure. The Office has not proven a *prima facie* case of obviousness because neither the references cited nor the knowledge generally available in the art provides any suggestion to modify or combine the prior art in the manner suggested by the Office.

a. Rejections under Kitahama in view of White

Claims 1-12 and 15-17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over US Patent No. 4,904,232 to Kitahama et al. (hereinafter "Kitahama) in view of US Patent No. 4,981,462 to White et al. (hereinafter "White"). The Office contends that "it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill ... to modify the belt of Kitahama et al. so that it is made from a single elastomeric material in view of White et al. in order to avoid cracking that is associated with v-ribs made from different elastomeric materials."